

**MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
MARINE & ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES TASK FORCE**

Town Hall Council Chambers
2731 Oak Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, March 12, 2025

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Nusbaum.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Members present: Sharon Hegstrom, Robert Howell (late), David Nusbaum, Leo Sand, Ed Rood (virtually) and Jennifer Rusk.

Excused: Bill Althoff

Staff: Harbormaster Curtis Ludwig

Council Liaison: John King

MOTION: MERTF Member Sand moved to allow MERTF Member Rood to participate virtually, seconded by MERTF Member Hegstrom.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approve The Agenda

MOTION: MERTF Member Hegstrom moved to approve the agenda, seconded by MERTF Member Sand.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

V. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – January 29, 2025

MOTION: MERTF Member Sand moved to approve the minutes, seconded by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Public Comment

Dennis Ramos, resident, asked what the town could do to remove the blockage at the end of their canal.

Craig Luce, resident, was trying to be the contact for the neighbors regarding beach renourishment and the possible erosion control method. The runway was being used as a staging point for the beach renourishment around Leonardo Arms. He was hoping for an update so he could stop the heresy among the neighbors.

MERTF Member Rusk read an email from resident Michael Thorton regarding dredging their canal to be entered into the record.

Chair Nusbaum read a letter from resident Michelle Yates regarding dredging a canal to be entered into the record.

VII. Current Items

A. FGCU/USDA Sea Grant Project

Dr. Chris Daley prepared a presentation regarding the project. Slides included Overview of Project, Objective 1: Assessing Ian's Geomorphic Impacts & Our Recovery, Objective 2: Develop and Test Morpho-dynamic Coastal Models (several slides), Next Steps for Objective 2, Next Steps - Objective 3 and Interventions, Scenarios and Objective 3: Additional "resilience experiment" scenarios using wave and LiDAR data collected during Hurricanes Helene and Milton as case study.

Chair Nusbaum asked whether Milton was a five or ten-year event. Dr. Daley replied that it was a 25-year event and Ian was a 100-year event. MERTF Member Howell asked about scenarios with plants on dunes. Dr. Daley responded that they would include vegetation. Chair Nusbaum thanked Dr. Daley for the update. Dr. Daley stated that the scenarios should be completed by the end of the year.

B. Water Quality/Watershed/Captains for Clean Water

Chair Nusbaum noted that he received numerous compliments from people who watched the joint meeting. MERTF Members Rusk and Sand recommended that the town council get involved with pushing to complete the projects for the Everglades watershed. Chair Nusbaum added that the mayor and vice mayor should regularly send letters to legislators. He also suggested contacting the Chamber of Commerce to see what they could do to encourage visitors to contact representatives from their states to support the Everglades.

MOTION: Chair Nusbaum moved to address the town at the Monday meeting and give their thoughts on encouraging the town to extol the Captain's clarification and the importance of keeping the Everglades project going, seconded by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Canal Dredging

Harbormaster Ludwig reported that the staff was preparing permit applications for canal dredging, which could take a year or longer. The town was exploring funding resources and Harbormaster Ludwig noted that it would cost millions to dredge all the canals. Harbormaster Ludwig pointed out that the current canal project was documenting the debris being removed and that it would be included in the maintenance records in the future. Chair Nusbaum asked whether the canals were part of the estuary. Harbormaster Ludwig will check.

VIII. Members' Items

MERTF Member Howell had a great time handing out the activity books at the shrimp festival and noted there was hardly any trash to clean up afterward. He stated that restaurants started using

plastic straws again. He said that some RVs are pumping sewage into the storm sewers. He will contact Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz.

MERTF Member Hegstrom agreed that they needed to communicate as the Captain said and she enjoyed the Activity book.

MERTF Member Sand supported getting involved with the Captains for Clean Water and trying to get funding to complete the Everglades project.

MERTF Member Rusk indicated the pop-up would be at the grand opening for the library on Sunday. The Anchorage Advisory Committee (AAC) will host their Cruiser's Appreciation Day on April 27, 2025, from 1:00-3:30 p.m. at Bayside Park and asked whether someone could handle the pop-up tent. She listed other organizations scheduled to attend and added that volunteers would receive a free lunch. She noted that porta-potties should be removed before the next hurricane.

Chair Nusbaum felt they needed to get as many visitors as possible to contact their state legislators regarding completing the Everglades project. He described a pre-written letter to hand out to visitors. MERTF Member Rusk stated that she had the information in a QR code. Chair Nusbaum commented that they should contact Captain Wittman to find out what tools he has available.

No items from other members.

IX. Staff Update – no items.

X. Public Comment

Ethan, owner of Lee Marine Construction, stated they have been doing a lot of work on the beach and many people have been asking about canal dredging, which is a significant problem. People who live on Madera have a beach behind their houses because the sand is the same height as the sand on the property side.

XI. MERTF Award

Chair Nusbaum saw an army of people cleaning up the beach the other day. He found out that Tunaskin sponsored the cleanup. He nominated the owner, Ben Duval, Tunaskin employees and hundreds of volunteers. Mr. Deval provided a brief history of their activities over the last 10 years. He stated that over 400 people were all over the island, including the side streets and picked up three tons of garbage in one day. He added that they donated \$5,000.00 to Keep Lee County Beautiful. MERTF Member Rusk added the library opening and a woman who painted the undersea at the library to the bank.

MOTION: Chair Nusbaum moved to award the MERTF award to Ben Duval, his employees at Tunaskin and the 400-plus volunteers, seconded by MERTF Member Sand.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

XII. Set Agenda for Next Meeting – April 10, 2025

Add an update on the ordinances and ask Projects Manager Chustz about inviting Operations & Compliance Manager Thomas Yozzo to the next meeting regarding code enforcement issues. Discussion was held regarding the process of hiring a new town manager. MERTF Member Rood will write the March Spotlight article, followed by MERTF Member Rusk, MERTF Member Howell and MERTF Member Hegstrom.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: MERTF Member Rusk moved to adjourn, seconded by MERTF Member Hegstrom.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Adopted April 10, 2025 with/without changes. Motion by Leo Chay
(DATE)

Vote 7-0 Signature David Moolenaar

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